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# The Piper of Hamelin





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# The Pied Piper of Hamelin





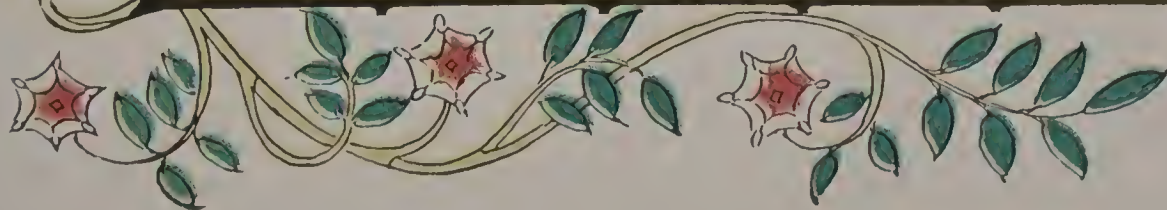
To See the Townsfolk Suffer So  
From Vermin, Was a Pity

AUG 19 '27

**T**he  
**D**ied  
**D**iper of  
**H**amelin

By  
**R**obert  
**B**rowning  
Illustrated By  
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**A**lbert **W**hitman **C**o  
**P**ublishers **C**hicago



The Pied Piper of Hamelin

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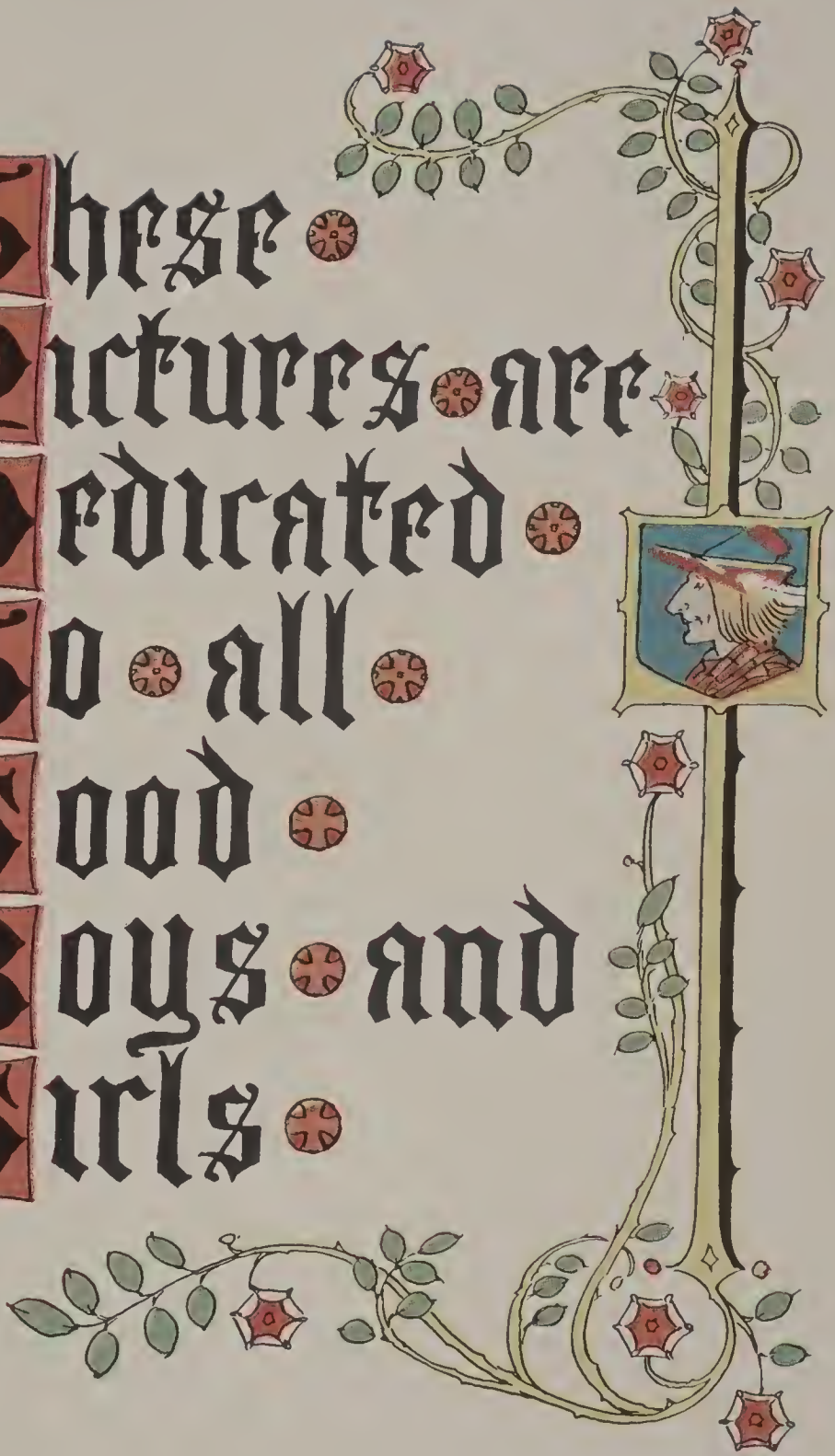
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These  
Pictures are  
Dedicated  
To all  
Good  
Boys and  
Girls







# Illustrations

## Full Pages

To See The Townsfolk Suffer So From Vermin Was A Pity  
And Bit The Babies In The Cradles  
They Fought The Dogs  
And Killed The Cats  
At Last The People In A Body To The Town Hall Came Flocking  
Made Nests Inside Men's Sunday Hats  
"Come In!" The Mayor Cried Looking Bigger  
Into The Street The Piper Stept  
From Street To Street He Piped Advancing  
I Found The Weser Rolling O'er Me  
For Council Dinners Make Rare Havoc  
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave, Hoch  
That Joyous Crowd At The Piper's Back  
A Wondrous Portal Opened Wide  
On The Great Church-Windows Painted



**A**nd bit the babies  
in the cradles



I

Hamelin Town's in Brunswick,  
By famous Hanover city;  
The river Weser, deep and wide,  
Washes its wall on the southern side;  
A pleasanter spot you never spied;  
But, when begins my ditty,  
Almost five hundred years ago,  
To see the townsfolk suffer so  
From vermin, was a pity.



# They fought the dogs

## II

Rats!

They fought the dogs and killed the cats,  
And bit the babies in the cradles,  
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,  
And licked the soup from the cooks'  
own ladles,



**A**nd killed the cats,

Split open the kegs of salted sprats,  
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,  
And even spoiled the women's chats  
By drowning their speaking  
With shrieking and squeaking  
In fifty different sharps and flats.



### III

At last the people in a body

To the Town Hall came flocking:

“’Tis clear,” cried they, “our Mayor’s  
a noddy;

“And as for our Corporation—shocking

“To think we buy gowns lined with ermine

“For dolts that can’t or won’t determine

“What’s best to rid us of our vermin!

“You hope, because you’re old and obese,

“To find in the furry civic robe ease?





**A**t last the people in a body  
to the Town Hall came flocking



“Rouse up, sirs! Give your brains a rack-  
ing

“To find the remedy we’re lacking,

“Or, sure as fate, we’ll send you packing!”

At this the Mayor and Corporation

Quaked with mighty consternation.





Made Nests Inside Men's Sunday Hats



#### IV

An hour they sat in council,

At length the Mayor broke silence:

“For a guilder I’d my ermine gown sell,

“I wish I were a mile hence!

“It’s easy to bid one rack one’s brain—

“I’m sure my poor head aches again,

“I’ve scratched it so, and all in vain.

“Oh for a trap, a trap a trap!”

Just as he said this what should hap

At the chamber door but a gentle tap?



“Bless us,” cried the Mayor, “what’s that?”  
(With the Corporation as he sat,  
Looking little though wondrous fat;  
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister  
Than a too-long-opened oyster,  
Save when at noon his paunch grew  
mutinous

For a plate of turtle green and glutinous)

“Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?

“Anything like the sound of a rat

“Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!”





V

“Come in!”—the Mayor cried looking  
bigger:

And in did come the strangest figure!  
His queer long coat from heel to head  
Was half of yellow and half of red,  
And he himself was tall and thin,  
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,  
And light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,  
No tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,  
But lips where smiles went out and in;  
There was no guessing his kith and kin:  
And nobody could enough admire  
The tall man and his quaint attire.



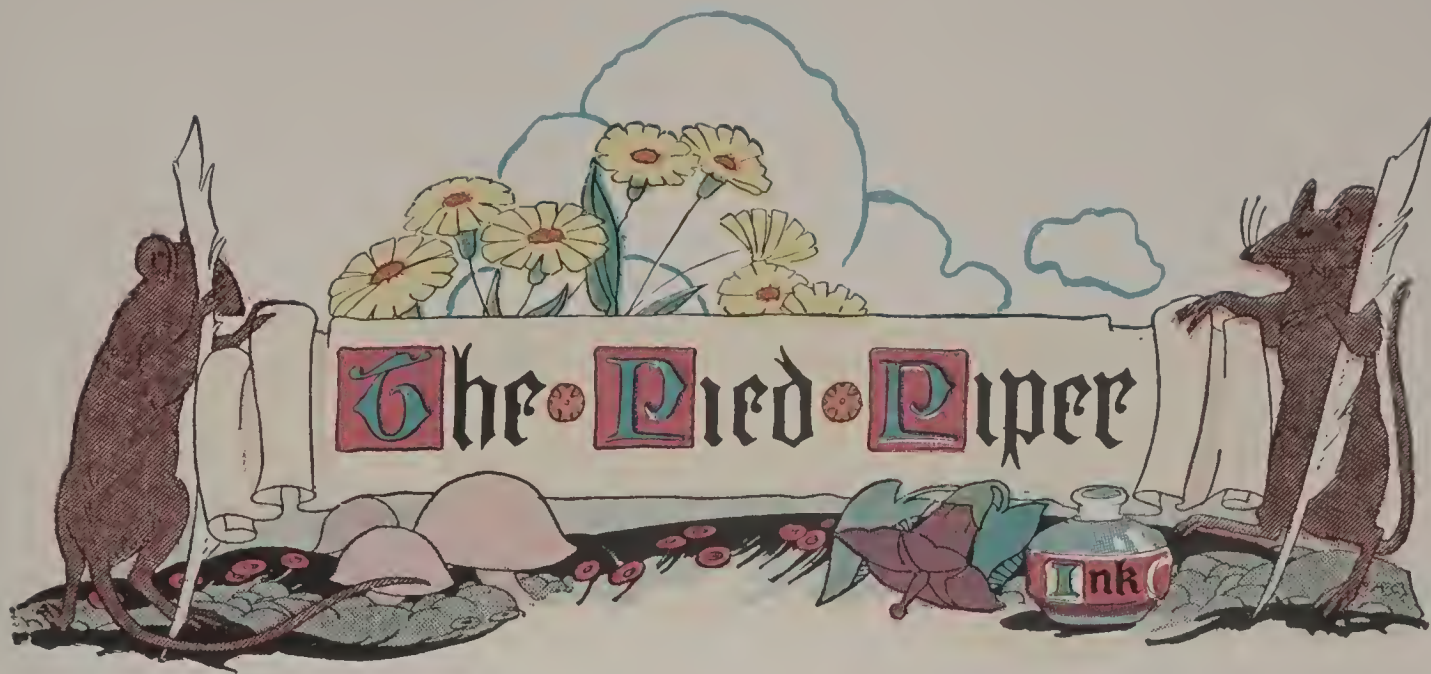
**A** "Come in!" the Mayor  
cried, looking bigger



Quoth one: "It's as my great-grandsire,  
"Starting up at the Trump of Doom's  
tone,  
"Had walked this way from his painted  
tombstone!"







## VI

He advanced to the council-table:  
And, "Please your honours," said he,  
    "I'm able,  
"By means of a secret charm, to draw  
    "All creatures living beneath the sun,  
    "That creep or swim or fly or run,  
"After me so as you never saw!





“And I chiefly use my charm  
“On creatures that do people harm,  
“The mole and toad and newt and viper;  
“And people call me the Pied Piper.”





(And here they noticed round his neck  
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,  
To match with his coat of the self-same  
cheque;  
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;  
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever  
straying  
As if impatient to be playing  
Upon this pipe, as low it dangled  
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)





“Yet,” said he, “poor piper as I am,  
“In Tartary I freed the Cham,  
    “Last June, from his huge swarms of  
        gnats;  
“I eased in Asia the Nizam  
    “Of a monstrous brood of vampyre-  
        bats:  
“And as for what your brain bewilders,





“If I can rid your town of rats  
“Will you give me a thousand guilders?”  
“One? fifty thousand!”—was the  
exclamation  
Of the astonished Mayor and Corpora-  
tion.





## VII

Into the street the Piper stept,  
Smiling first a little smile,  
As if he knew what magic slept  
In his quiet pipe the while;





JM&C

**I**nto the street the  
Piper stept



Then, like a musical adept,  
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,  
And green and blue his sharp eyes  
twinkled,  
Like a candle-flame where salt is  
sprinkled;  
And ere three shrill notes the pipe  
uttered,  
You heard as if an army muttered;  
And the murmuring grew to a grum-  
bling;  
And the grumbling grew to a mighty  
rumbling;





And out of the houses the rats came  
tumbling.  
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny  
rats,  
Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny  
rats,  
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,  
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,  
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,  
Families by tens and dozens,  
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—  
Followed the Piper for their lives.





From street to street he piped advancing,  
And step for step they followed dancing,  
Until they came to the river Weser,  
    Wherein all plunged and perished!  
—Save one who, stout as Julius Caesar,  
Swam across and lived to carry  
(As he the manuscript he cherished)  
To Rat-land home his commentary:  
Which was, “At the first shrill notes of  
    the pipe,  
“I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,  
“And putting apples, wondrous ripe,  
“Into a cider-press’s gripe:



JMEC

**F**

rom street to street  
he piped advancing



“And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,

“And a leaving ajar of conserve-cup-boards,

“And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,

“And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks:

“And it seemed as if a voice

(“Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery

“Is breathed) called out, ‘Oh rats, rejoice!’



“The world is grown to one vast  
drysaltery!  
“So munch on, crunch on, take your  
nuncheon,  
“Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!”





“And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,  
“All ready staved, like a great sun shone  
“Glorious scarce an inch before me,  
“Just as methought it said, ‘Come, bore  
me!’  
“—I found the Weser rolling o’er me.”





**L**

found the Weser  
rolling over me



## VIII

You should have heard the Hamelin  
people

Ringing the bells till they rocked the  
steeple.

“Go,” cried the Mayor, “and get long  
poles,

“Poke out the nests and block up the  
holes!





“Consult with carpenters and builders,  
“And leave in our town not a trace  
“Of the rats!”—when suddenly, up the  
face

Of the Piper perked in the market-place,  
With a, “First, if you please, my  
thousand guilders!”





## IX

A thousand guilders! The mayor looked  
blue;  
So did the Corporation too.  
For council dinners made rare havoc  
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-Grave,  
Hock;  
And half the money would replenish  
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.



To pay this sum to a wandering fellow  
With a gypsy coat of red and yellow!  
“Beside,” quoth the Mayor with a know-  
ing wink,  
“Our business was done at the river’s  
brink;  
“We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,  
“And what’s dead can’t come to life,  
I think.





**F**or Council dinners, make  
rare havoc



**W**ith Claret, Moselle,  
Win-de-Grave, Hoch



“So, friend, we’re not the folks to shrink  
“From the duty of giving you something  
for drink,  
“And a matter of money to put in  
your poke;  
“But as for the guilders, what we spoke  
“Of them, as you very well know,  
was a joke.  
“Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.  
“A thousand guilders! Come take fifty.”



## X

The Piper's face fell, and he cried  
"No trifling! I can't wait, beside!  
"I've promised to visit by dinnertime  
"Bagdat, and accept the prime  
"Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's  
rich in,  
"For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,  
"Of a nest of scorpions no survivor:





“With him I proved no bargain-driver,  
“With you, don’t think I’ll bate a stiver!  
“And folks who put me in a passion  
“May find me pipe after another  
fashion.”







XI

“How?” cried the Mayor, “d’ye think

I brook

“Being worse treated than a Cook?

“Insulted by a lazy ribald

“With idle pipe and vesture piebald?

“You threaten us, fellow? Do your

worst,

“Blow your pipe there till you burst!”





## XII

Once more he stept into the street  
And to his lips again  
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight  
cane;  
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet  
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning  
Never gave the enraptured air)  
There was a rustling that seemed like a  
bustling  
Of merry crowds justling at pitching  
and hustling;  
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes  
clattering,



Little hands clapping and little tongues  
chattering  
And, like fowls in a barn-yard when bar-  
ley is scattering,  
Out came the children running.  
All the little boys and girls,  
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,  
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,  
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after  
The wonderful music with shouting and  
laughter.





### XIII

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council  
stood  
As if they were changed into blocks of  
wood,  
Unable to move a step, or cry  
To the children merrily skipping by,  
—Could only follow with the eye  
That joyous crowd at the Piper's back.



**W**hat joyous crowd at the  
Piper's back



But how the Mayor was on the rack,  
And the wretched Council's bosoms  
beat,  
As the Piper turned from the High  
Street  
To where the Weser rolled its waters  
Right in the way of their sons and  
daughters!



However he turned from South to West,  
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps  
addressed,  
And after him the children pressed;  
Great was the joy in every breast





“He never can cross that mighty top!  
“He’s forced to let the piping drop,  
“And we shall see our children stop!”  
When, lo, as they reached the mountain-  
side,  
A wondrous portal opened wide,  
As if a cavern was suddenly hollowed;







JMFC

**A**

wondrous portal  
opened wide



And the Piper advanced and the children  
followed,  
And when all were in to the very last,  
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.  
Did I say all? No! One was lame,  
And could not dance the whole of the  
way;  
And in after years if you would blame  
His sadness, he was used to say,—  
“It’s dull in our town since my play-  
mates left!



“I can’t forget that I’m bereft  
“Of all the pleasant sights they see,  
“Which the Piper also promised me.  
“For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,  
“Joining the town and just at hand,  
“Where water gushed and fruit-trees  
grew  
“And flowers put forth a fairer hue,  
“And everything was strange and new;





“The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,  
“And their dogs outran our fallow deer,  
“And honey-bees had lost their stings,  
“And horses were born with eagle’s wings:  
“And just as I became assured  
“My lame foot would be speedily cured,  
“The music stopped and I stood still,  
“And found myself outside the hill,  
“Left alone against my will,  
“To go now limping as before,  
“And never hear of that country more!”



XIV

Alas, alas for Hamelin!

There came into many a burgher's  
pate

A text which says that heaven's gate  
Opes to the rich at as easy rate  
As the needle's eye takes a camel in!



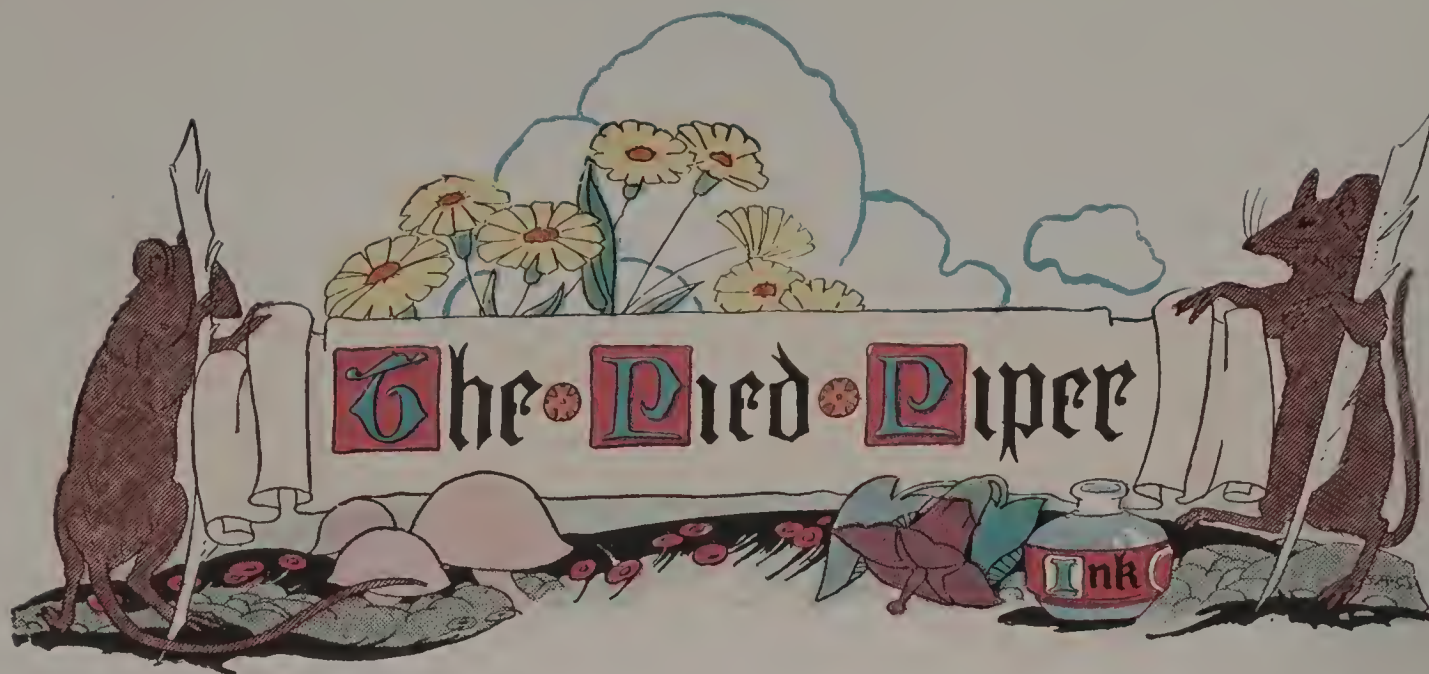


The Mayor sent East, West, North, and  
South,  
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,  
Wherever it was men's lot to find  
him,  
Silver and gold to his heart's content,  
If he'd only return the way he went,  
And bring the children behind him.  
But when they saw 'twas a lost en-  
deavour,  
And Piper and dancers were gone for  
ever,



They made a decree that lawyers never  
Should think their records dated duly  
If, after the day of the month and year,  
These words did not as well appear,  
“And so long after what happened here  
“On the Twenty-second of July,  
“Thirteen hundred and seventy-six:”  
And the better in memory to fix  
The place of the children’s last retreat,  
They called it, the Pied Piper’s Street—





Where any one playing on pipe or tabor  
Was sure for the future to lose his  
labour.

Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern  
To shock with mirth a street so  
solemn;

But opposite the place of the cavern  
They wrote the story on a column,  
And on the great church window  
painted

The same, to make the world  
acquainted

How their children were stolen away,  
And there it stands to this very day.





To the Memory of our dear  
Children ♦ ♦ ♦ departed ♦ July  
XXII. MCMXXVI

**O**n the great church-  
windows painted



And I must not omit to say  
That in Transylvania there's a tribe  
Of alien people who ascribe  
The outlandish ways and dress  
On which their neighbours lay such  
stress,  
To their fathers and mothers having  
risen  
Out of some subterraneous prison  
Into which they were trepanned  
Long time ago in a mighty band  
Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick  
land,  
But how or why, they don't understand.



## XV

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers  
Of scores out with all men—especially  
pipers!

And, whether they pipe us free from rats  
or from mice,

If we've promised them aught, let us  
keep our promise!



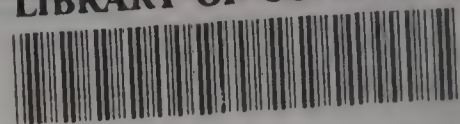








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